

# **BLUEPRINT for ACTION**

**April 28, 1998**

# **Near Heights Community Blueprint for Action Planning Department**

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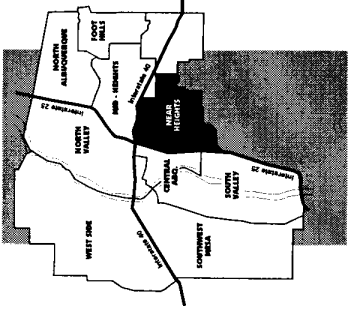
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**May, 1998**



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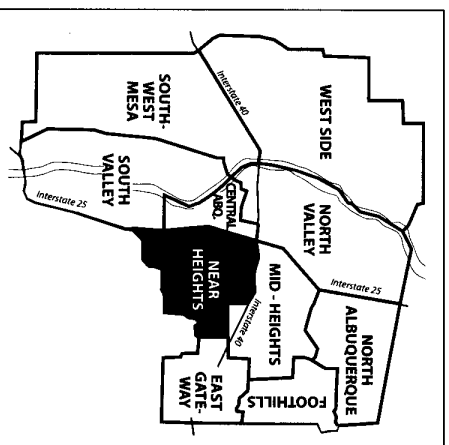
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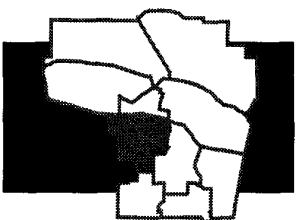


Albuquerque's Community Planning Areas

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

#### **City of Albuquerque's Strategic Planning Process**

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# Executive Summary

The Near Heights was Albuquerque's first development east of what is now I-25. The area includes most of the City's largest institutions and employers, including UNM, T-VI, KAFB, Lovelace, Presbyterian, and the State Fairgrounds. The Near Heights also boasts the City's best known neighborhood shopping area, Nob Hill. However, the Near Heights currently suffers from high crime rates, deteriorating infrastructure, and declining neighborhoods. How to deal with these problem areas, while reaping the greatest benefits from its many assets has become the Near Heights' challenge.

Community members most often talk about the strengths in the area as being: strong community spirit, Nob Hill/UNM shopping areas, UNM, pedestrian-orientation, and diversity of people and housing.

Weaknesses are listed as: absentee landlords, deteriorating businesses and rental properties, loss of single family housing to rentals and multi-family conversions, code vio-

lations such as weed and litter, and declining infrastructure.

The Near Heights Community Planning Partnership identified Central Avenue from Washington to San Pedro as the area they would most like to work on, and corridor revitalization as the activity most needed there. During the 1998 State Legislative session, the City received \$125,000 to develop a revitalization strategy for Central Avenue from Girard to Louisiana. This money now enables the Partnership members along with others in the community to work on economic revitalization activities and improvements to the built environment along Central Avenue, particularly at the Hiliand Theater area, and the State Fairgrounds.

Key issues for the whole Near Heights which were listed by Partnership members include: commercial revitalization, neighborhood revitalization, infrastructure deterioration, and code enforcement. For recommendations regarding how to address Partnership priorities,

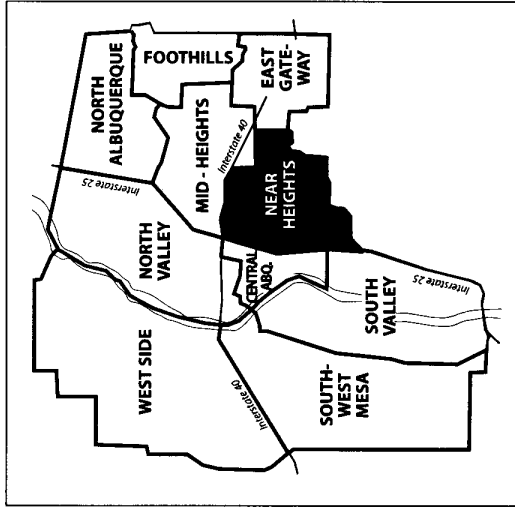
please see the "Priority Issues and Recommendations" section at the end of this document.

This document attempts to provide both short-term and long-term proposals for dealing with issues in the Near Heights. It provides proposals which have little or no cost associated with them, as well as proposals which will cost significant amounts of money. With the current budget shortfall being faced by the City of Albuquerque, it is important to look at the low cost/short-term proposals, while keeping in mind the bigger ticket items for future funding years.

☐



# introduction



Albuquerque's Community Planning Areas

## Overview of Community-Based Planning

In order to provide more effective planning and service delivery, and to enhance the sense of unique identity in each community throughout the city, the Community-Based Planning Program was initiated. In 1993-94, public workshops were held which asked participants to define the geographic boundaries of their community and to identify its notable features. Based on this information, the metro area was divided, for planning purposes, into ten distinct communities. A community planner was assigned to each community to facilitate broad-based public involvement in planning. Nine are City-staffed, while the South Valley effort is led by Bernalillo County.

Community Partnerships made up of City Councilors, City government staff, representatives from public schools, neighborhoods, businesses, institutions and others were formed in the communities to assess community conditions, and prioritize and address community issues. With city staff assistance, the partnerships design approaches and solutions which build on their communities' assets, network to find public and private resources, and work to accomplish needed changes to City planning, policy-making, and spending for projects and programs in their community planning areas.

The Public Works Department, Family and Community Services Department, and the

Capital Implementation Program's Parks, Open Space and Trails section each have their own community planner to help coordinate sub-area planning and implementation. Interagency coordination is further facilitated through a Government Response Team comprised of representatives from the Mayor's Office, City Council Office, and City Departments.

## The Near Heights Planning Partnership

The Near Heights Partnership was formed in the summer of 1996. It includes members from area neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, and the City. The group has helped define area conditions and needs, and chose a specific project area which has now received funding from the State Legislature for improvements and planning. The Partnership is charged with looking at longer range issues involving the entire community, and tries to bring that larger area perspective to their discussions and projects. The priority issues and recommendations which were identified by the partnership and other community groups are discussed at the end of this blueprint in the Priority Issues and Recommendations section.

## Blueprint Contents

This blueprint is one of nine. It presents an analysis of current conditions in the Near

Heights Community, identifies priority issues, and suggests recommendations. The document is divided into three main sections:

1. Significant community conditions (Key Findings) are summarized under each of the City's seven goals in order to establish baseline measures that can be used to evaluate community progress.
2. The Community Profile is divided up into nine categories such as history and development, transportation and infrastructure, and commercial, business, and job development. Community conditions are analyzed under each category, including Key Findings & Recommended actions. Categorizing the community conditions in this manner will help identify the capital improvement and service priorities in the community, suggest the roles of participants in implementation, and direct future coordination among City and other agencies.
3. Priority issues and recommendations, based on the Community Profile analysis, are presented. The Partnership played a major role in identifying the priority issues and is supportive of the recommendations.

The Blueprint uses a variety of sources to identify the issues including:

- The Community Planning Partnership
- Youth planning meetings organized by the Office of Neighborhood Coordination
- Youth planning meetings organized by the Cultural and Recreation Department
- Community meetings for the HUD 5-Year Plan
- Special Purpose Workshops (sector plans, CPTED, etc.)
- Many City documents including:  
*Albuquerque Progress Report*,  
*Sustainability Indicator Report*, and  
*Area Sector Plans*
- City staff field observations

Because information is taken from many sources, it should be interpreted with caution. For example, census data may have been compiled by tract, block group, or extrapolation methods. Also, some of the information came from pure observation with no supporting data. Nonetheless, we believe the major points derived from the analyses are useful.



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### ***How Can The Blueprint Be Used?***

#### **...to plan**

The Blueprint is intended to provide a basis for actions which can improve the quality of life. It provides the baseline data needed to understand where we are now, the trends which explain how we arrived here, and recommends ways to effect change in the community. It can be used to evaluate conditions, generate discussion, and propose solutions to the issues identified. A step further for the Blueprint and Community Planning will be to "zoom in" on an area or neighborhood in need of a more specific development plan.

The Blueprints can be revised and expanded to develop Community Area Plans. The Community Area Plans can serve as building blocks for revising and updating the City/County Comprehensive Plan. Common issues, strengths and opportunities in all nine Blueprints could lead to city and region-wide policies, and help inform development of the Capital Implementation Program.

#### **...to budget**

The Blueprint contains the community's needs, desires, values and dreams and could be used as a guide by public officials and other policy makers in their near-term efforts to improve the social and physical environment in the commu-

nity. Using the Blueprint as a budgeting tool would be one way of focusing budget emphasis on citizen perspectives.

The Blueprints are intended to be updated periodically and may have individual components updated more frequently. If you have questions or want to participate in planning for the community, call your Community Planner at 924-3860. ☐



## City of Albuquerque's Strategic Planning Process

### ***Community Blueprint as Part of City of Albuquerque's Strategic Planning Process***

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The City of Albuquerque is charged with providing quality service to its citizens. This objective is getting harder to achieve, however, as the gap between the demand for service and lagging growth in budgetary resources to provide the service continues to grow wider. For this reason the City of Albuquerque has embarked on a significant effort to improve service quality by drafting a *Strategic Management Plan* dated January 22, 1998. The Plan suggests some strategies for how city departments can improve conditions in the city by:

- developing a current and thorough understanding of community and customer conditions and trends;
- translating that knowledge into effective and efficient programs that improve those conditions; and
- measuring results of programs for their effectiveness.

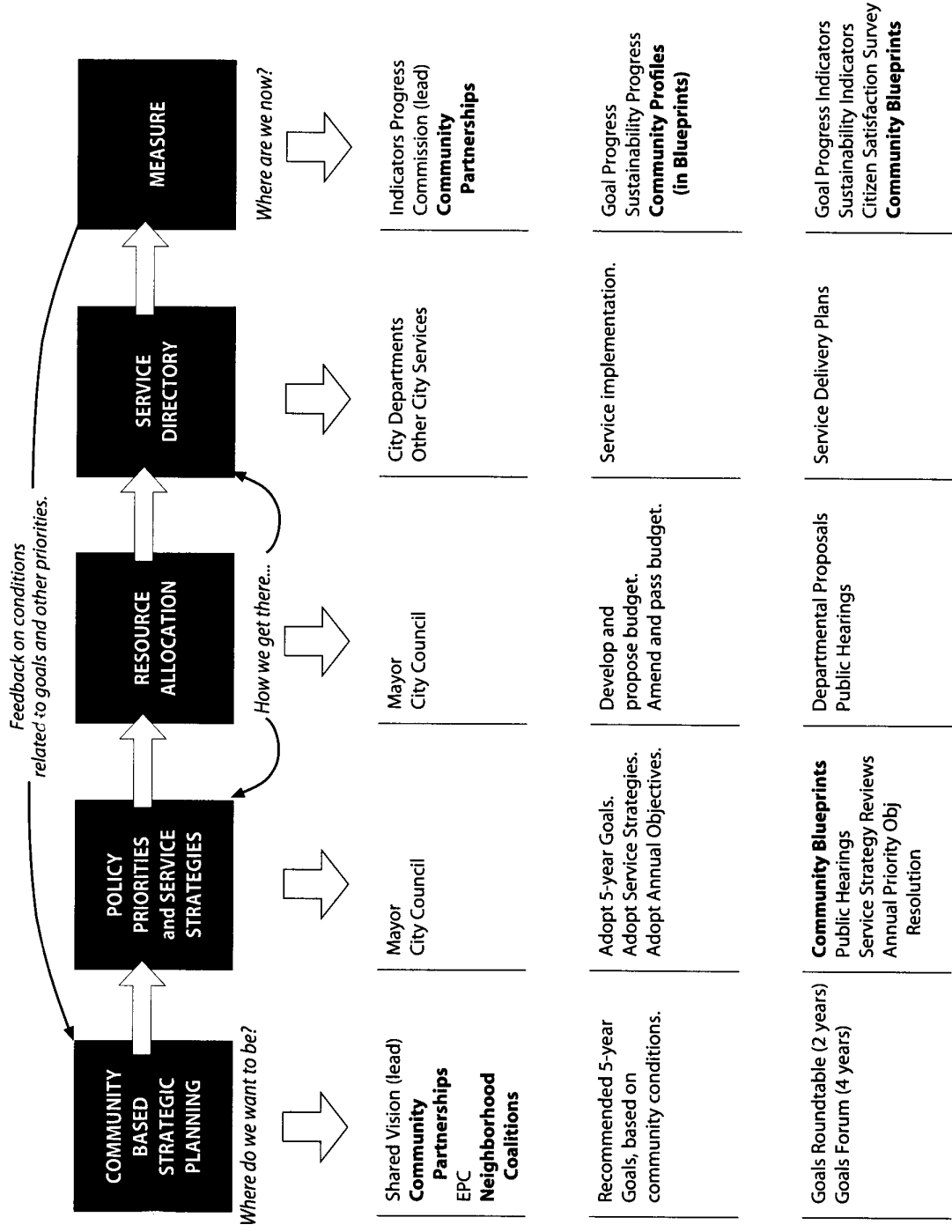
The Community Blueprints have accomplished the first two objectives by developing a profile of community conditions and suggesting recommendations to improve those conditions. Community Planners will work with the Office

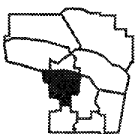
of Management and Operations Improvement and the community partnerships to develop the third objective. Any projects that come about as a result of the "Recommended Action" in the Blueprint will need to contain quantitative measures to determine if community conditions improve as a result of the actions..

The following graph shows how the Community Planning effort fits in with the City of Albuquerque's Strategic Planning Process to track progress toward improved service to the citizens of Albuquerque. ☐



# Strategic Planning in the City of Albuquerque – Vision in Action Process





## City of Albuquerque's 5-Year Goals and the Near Heights Community Conditions

The City of Albuquerque adopted the following seven City Goals in 1994. They are used to set one-year objectives for City Government and to organize annual budget requests. They are also used as the basis for performance review documented in the Albuquerque Progress Report, one of the City's primary evaluation tools.

The Community Blueprints for Action organize the key findings about each of Albuquerque's Community Planning Areas under these city-wide goals. This will help establish baseline measures of community conditions that can be used to evaluate community progress.

### GOAL 1: Enhance the basic social contract by enhancing the lives of youth and seniors, supporting the family, fostering and maintaining stable neighborhoods and providing affordable housing.

- The Near Heights has the largest number of persons and households in poverty.
- There is a large percentage of single parent families and renter occupied housing in the Near Heights.
- The Near Heights has the highest proportion of single female heads of household.
- There are a large number of Near Heights children from single parent families.
- All City departments should factor in the needs of children when planning programs and expenditures.
- There are many educational opportunities for children in the Near Heights, but their home and neighborhood environments must be healthy in order for them to pursue these opportunities.

- Seniors and special populations in the Near Heights need more public transit, affordable and alternative housing, and pedestrian-friendly commercial spaces.
- There are a wide variety of housing types in the Near Heights.
- Residents are concerned about the quality of affordable housing in the area.
- Purchase options for low-income housing should be made available to Near Heights residents.
- The City should offer incentives for developers to construct higher density, alternative housing infill projects.
- The Youth Recreation Needs Assessment recommends that Near Heights children participate in programs hosted by open space facilities.
- Fewer than one third of Near Heights residents feel safe in their neighborhoods.

### Goal 2: Improve public safety services.

- Trumbull, La Mesa, and Kirtland Addition are three of the City's ten CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) neighborhoods, with Trumbull being the pilot implementation neighborhood.
- CPTED should be developed further into LCED (Liveable Community through Environmental Design)
- APD has begun implementing Community Policing in the Near Heights, and residents and police are becoming better acquainted.
- Condition and appearance of the community and involvement of citizens are integral to increasing safety in the Near Heights Community Planning Area.
- Most Albuquerqueans recognize the Near Heights for its high levels of activity, diversity, and crime.
- Crime is a great threat to the community spirit and activity level in the Near Heights.

### Goal 3: For infrastructure, equitably balance new construction, maintenance and repair.

- The Near Heights suffers from declining infrastructure, and Near Heights partnership members list deteriorating infrastructure as a key concern.
- While several infrastructure projects in various stages are underway in the Near Heights, there is not adequate funding to complete these, nor to keep up with annual maintenance throughout the area.
- The Near Heights will benefit from a balance between social service infrastructure expenditures and other infrastructure expenditures such as sewer line repair and sidewalk maintenance.

**Goal 4: Achieve sustainable development, and balanced development, and redevelopment, including infill development.**

- The City should offer incentives for developers to construct higher density, alternative housing infill projects.
- Although the Near Heights is home to the University and Nob Hill commercial areas, there are many other commercial zones which are in decline, especially along Central Avenue.

**Goal 5: Increase environmental protection and resource conservation.**

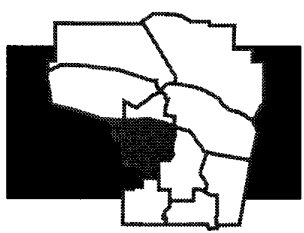
- Probably the greatest threat to the environment of the Near Heights is air pollution.
- Near Heights businesses and residents should be encouraged to change portions of their landscaping to low water use plants.
- The Near Heights has more people using transit and walking than do most other parts of the city.
- Central Avenue, the heart of the Near Heights, has a high daily traffic volume.
- Traffic volumes coupled with a relatively positive attitude on the part of residents about alternative transit make the Near Heights an ideal candidate for increased mass transit.
- The City should focus attention for mass transit development on the Near Heights, and particularly the Presbyterian-TVI-UNM-Nob Hill corridor, creating links between this corridor and other activity center such as the Biopark-Old Town-Downtown corridor.

**Goal 6: Adopt and pursue implementation of an economic vitality strategy.**

- In order to enhance quality of life, and protect adjacent neighborhoods, it is necessary to revitalize aging commercial districts.
- Other cities have accomplished such revitalization through a combination of improvements to public spaces, private spaces, and business organizing.

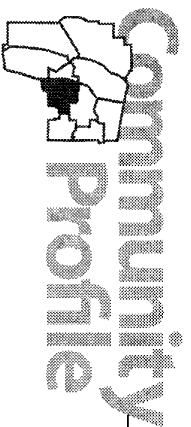
**Goal 7: Foster the expression and appreciation of Albuquerque's cultures.**

- The Near Heights is very active culturally, and contains several of the city's best-known cultural facilities.
- The Near Heights has various public and private recreational facilities.



# **The Near Heights Community Profile**

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## History and Development

[ Goal 4 ] Achieve sustainable development, and balanced development and redevelopment, including infill development.

**T**he Near Heights Community Planning Area is in the south-central portion of the city, with I-25 as a western boundary, Wyoming as an eastern boundary, I-40 on the north edge, and the Airport and Kirtland Air Force Base on the south edge. The area's total population in 1990 was 74,437 (*Source: 1990 U.S. Census*). The geographic center of the area is dominated by The University of New Mexico and the Nob Hill Shopping District, both of which are activity centers for the City as a whole.

### History and Development

The Near Heights began as a continuation of development which had occurred west of Central Ave. in the Huning Highland neighborhood. In 1891, local real estate developer, Roy Stamm, purchased land and platted the "Terrace Addition," which ran four blocks south of Central Avenue, from the City limit at High Street all the way to Yale Boulevard. However, growth in the area remained slow until the 1920's. At this point, residential and commercial development began to extend eastward to Carlisle Boulevard. During the 1930's over 300 new dwellings were built in the University Heights area which ran from Central to Garfield and Yale to

*Timeline of the Near Heights Community Planning Area*

1890's UNM founded	1910 eight houses completed in University Heights subdivision	1920's Spruce Park and University Heights subdivisions expand	1930's Silver Hill, Monte Vista, and College View Addition subdivisions develop – Monte Vista Elementary School built	1936 Monte Vista Fire Station WPA project funded	1948 Nob Hill Shopping Center opens	1950's Trumbull and La Mesa neighborhoods develop	1960's and 1970's Neighborhoods adjacent to UNM begin to deteriorate and become student housing
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### ***Subareas***

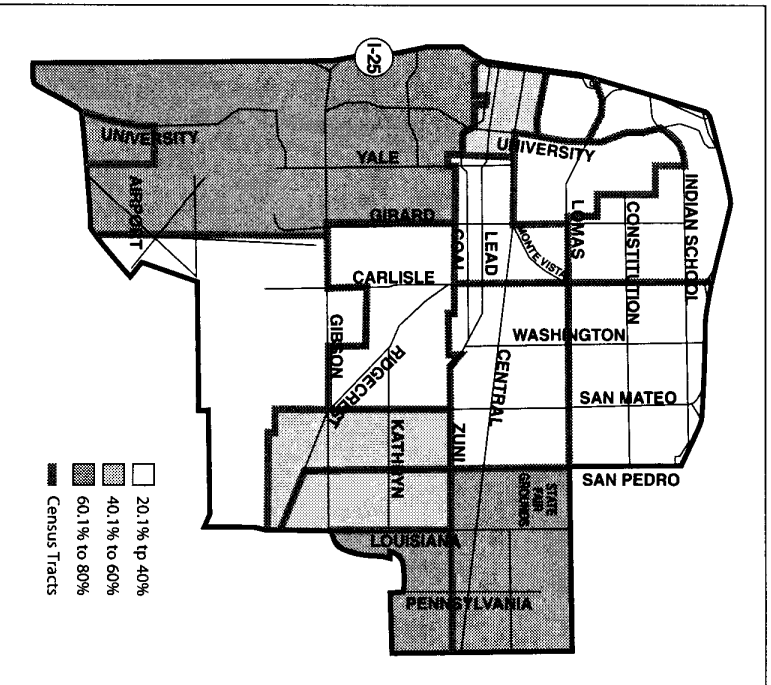
Girard. In 1938 the State Fairgrounds were built on Route 66, now Central Avenue, and in 1948, the Nob Hill Shopping Center opened at the corner of Carlisle and Central. This signaled the establishment of the Near Heights as a major population center of the time, and provided the first commercial center outside of downtown (*Source: Albuquerque's Environmental Story*).

The Near Heights continued building out and developing through the 1950's and '60's, but by the 1980's many parts of the area had begun experiencing decline. Over the last twenty years, parts of the area have been revitalized (Nob Hill), while others have continued to experience deteriorating living and working conditions (Trumbull, La Mesa). Overall, the area has one of the strongest identities in the city, and elicits great devotion and loyalty from its residents. It is not uncommon to hear Near Heights community members state that they live, work, and shop exclusively in the area. For residents of the rest of Albuquerque, the Near Heights serves as the home to many of Albuquerque's most important institutions. Because the institutions there have regional significance, there are a large number of "visitors" coming to the area daily. The Near Heights serves as an employment center for thousands of Albuquerqueans from all over the city, as well as provides citywide cultural and entertainment facilities.

The Near Heights contains several well known subareas, including: the University Area, Nob Hill, Ridgcrest, Central Avenue (Route 66), and the Albuquerque Sunport. There are sector plans for the University Neighborhoods, Nob Hill, Trumbull and La Mesa. □

## People and Demographics

<p>[ Goal 1 ] Enhance the basic social contract by enhancing the lives of youth and seniors, supporting the family, fostering and maintaining stable neighborhoods and providing affordable housing.</p> <p>[ Goal 7 ] Foster the expression and appreciation of Albuquerque's cultures.</p>
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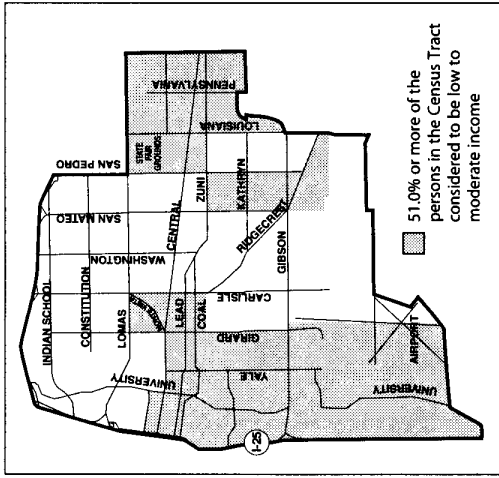
Percentage of Minority Population

### Ethnicity

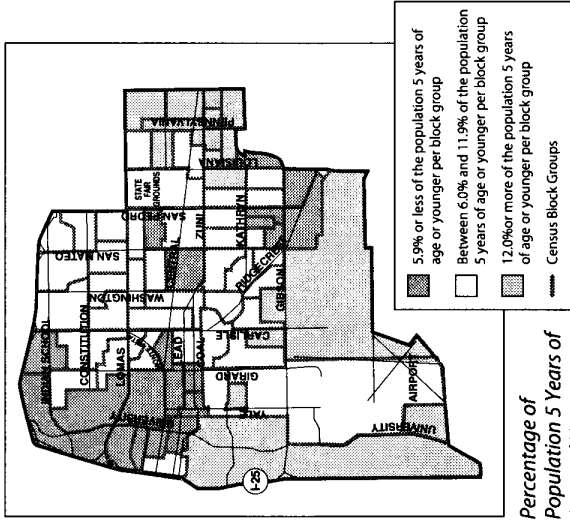
The population of the Near Heights is very diverse. The area has one of the largest concentrations of new immigrants in the city, as well as the second largest population of Native Americans (4.6%), and the largest number of Asian residents (2.4%). Hispanics make up 25% of the population of the area, and the Near Heights has the largest population of Black residents in the city (4.3%) (Source: *Human Services Needs Assessment*). The diversity of the people in the Near Heights results in a diversity of attributes and needs. The ethnic makeup tends to be clustered geographically, with Trumbull and La Mesa neighborhoods housing many of the new immigrants and Asian families, and Kirtland Addition neighborhood housing the bulk of the area's black population.

### Income Level

The Near Heights has the largest number of persons and households in poverty, and the largest



Percentage of Low to Moderate Income Persons



Percentage of Population 5 Years of Age and Younger

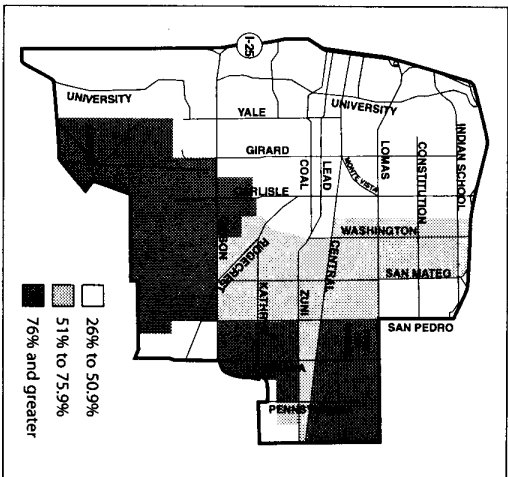
number of public assistance recipients of any planning area, in addition to having the largest number and highest proportion of single female heads of household of any planning area (*Source: Human Services Needs Assessment*). Not coincidentally, the area also has the highest percentage of renter-occupied housing of any planning area (*Source: 1990 Census*). The high percentages of single parent families and families in poverty raise issues regarding housing affordability, including the question of whether affordable housing is inequitably distributed throughout the city, with the Near Heights hosting more than its share (see Housing section for further information).

### ***Families, Children, and Youth***

Two Near Heights' schools, Emerson Elementary and van Buren Middle School have nearly 99% of

their student populations turn over each year. Creating safe, supportive environments for children and their families is important to the health of the Near Heights community. In order to facilitate this, the City should continue to look for ways to coordinate funds, programs, and facilities with APS. City departments should also look for ways to incorporate the needs of children and youth into all of their activities and planning.

Cultural and Recreation Services staff have begun to factor children's needs into their planning processes by conducting the Youth Recreation Needs Assessment. This study was conducted by staff and consultants at middle schools in each community planning area. In the Near Heights, workshops were held at both Jefferson and Van Buren middle schools. Recommendations for future activities which can be sponsored by the City through recreation services, community centers, and the Middle School Initiative are customized to each middle school. Other departments should continue to do what Cultural and Recreation Services has done. The needs of children should be factored into all planning and expenditures in the Near Heights. By doing that, City staff can help insure that Near Heights kids get what they need to help their parents and others build a stronger community.



APS Elementary School Mobility Rates

## Education

Schools in the Near Heights are as diverse as the area itself. There are schools known citywide for their excellent and innovative programs (Bandler, Monte Vista, Zia, Jefferson), and schools known citywide for their high transient rates (Van Buren, Emerson). Yet, by and large, children in the Near Heights have a good range of options available to them. UNM and T-VI both offer courses for high school students; community centers have mentoring programs and after school activities; and Sandia Labs and Kirtland Air Force Base volunteer staff, donate monies, and provide technology to many educational programs throughout Albuquerque. However, inadequate living conditions, violence, drugs, and language barriers are some of the challenges faced by many Near Heights children. These conditions can make it difficult for any

child to learn, regardless of what opportunities s/he is presented with.

## Seniors/Special Populations

Much of the information contained in other sections of this document describes the needs of seniors and special populations. To summarize, there is a need for more public transit in the Near Heights, and many of the users of this service are seniors and special populations. There is also a need for more pedestrian-friendly commercial areas which includes making sidewalks ADA accessible. In addition, seniors will benefit from alternative and affordable housing such as condominiums, apartments, and townhouses. Property which can be purchased so that the monthly cost is constant, but which has little or no outdoor space to maintain is an excellent option for seniors and others on fixed incomes.

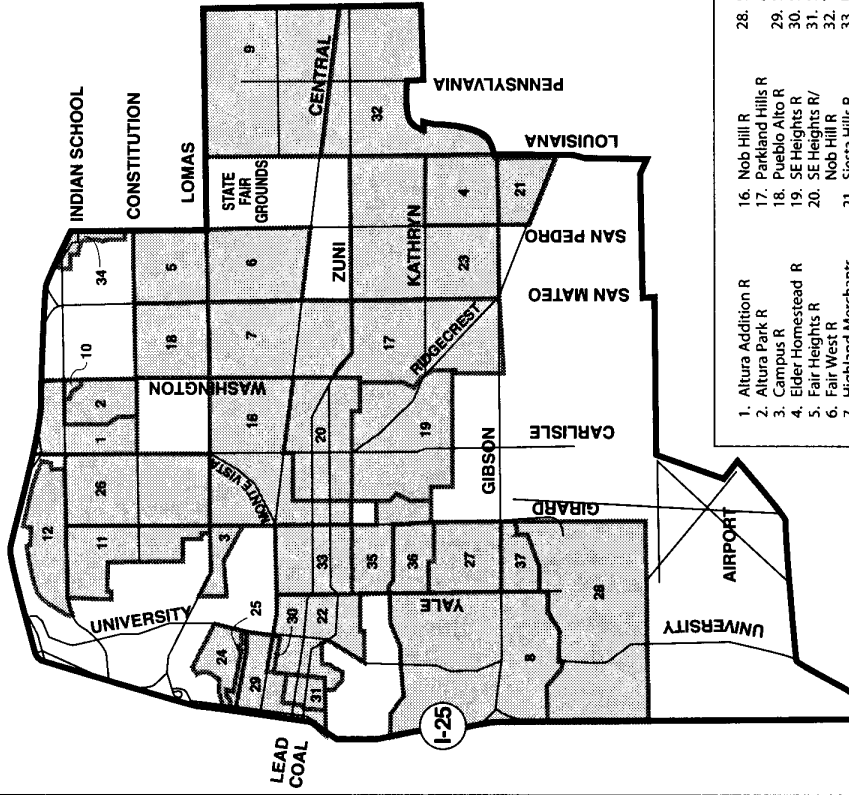
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### KEY FINDINGS:

- The Near Heights is extremely diverse in terms of ethnicity and income level.
- The Near Heights has the largest number of persons and households in poverty.
- There is a large percentage of single parent families and renter occupied housing in the Near Heights.
- The Near Heights has the highest proportion of single female heads of household.
- There are a large number of Near Heights children from single parent families.
- All City departments should factor in the needs of children when planning programs and expenditures.
- There are many educational opportunities for children in the Near Heights, but their home and neighborhood environments must be healthy in order for them to pursue these opportunities.
- Seniors and special populations in the Near Heights need more public transit, affordable and alternative housing, and pedestrian-friendly commercial spaces.

[ Goal 7 ] Foster the expression and appreciation of Albuquerque's cultures.

Near Heights' Neighborhood Associations



### Area's Role in Albuquerque's Overall Identity

The Albuquerque Community Identity Final Report states that, "This community's [the Near Heights'] social and economic diversity, well known landmarks, and institutions and accessibility are significant community assets." The Near Heights has, in fact, taken on a role similar to that of downtown in many other cities. It is in the Near Heights that Albuquerqueans find pedestrian-oriented shopping, small coffee houses, foreign movies, and other cultural amenities. These are assets utilized by people city-wide. Hopefully, as both Downtown Albuquerque and the Near Heights continue to redevelop, a stronger link can be created between the two, making Central Avenue the "cultural corridor" city activists have long hoped it could be.

### Elements of Community Identity

Because of the great ethnic and income diversity in the Near Heights, it is difficult to assign one identity to the area. However, when asked to describe the area, residents frequently cite several positive

elements including:

- A high level of activity
- The Nob Hill shopping district
- Numerous community institutions
- High levels of pedestrian and bicycle activity
- Charming older houses and parks.

Members of the Near Heights partnership indicated that the community's identity includes:

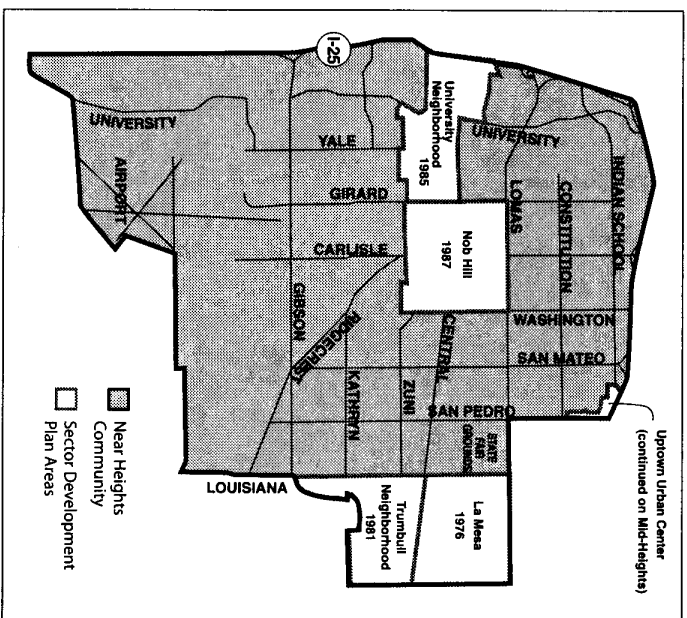
- Diversity
- Affordable housing in all parts of the area
- Lots of churches
- A strong sense of community among neighbors.

Some negative elements which are sometimes used to describe the Near Heights include:

- High crime rates
- Heavy traffic
- General deterioration

### **Community Groups and Facilities**

Several of the area's activity centers provide opportunities for fostering community identity.



*Near Heights Sector Development Plans*

UNM and T-VI hold various community events such as Homecoming, community forums, and sporting events, while the University and Nob Hill shopping districts are popular locations for dining, shopping, and people watching. There are approximately 37 neighborhood associations in the area, and many of them organize community events as well. In addition to neighborhood associations, the area has five community centers, a senior center, thirteen public schools, and two libraries which also serve as community activity and meeting spaces. Many of the Near

Heights schools are well known throughout Albuquerque, both for their programs, and often for their unique architecture. The area's high school, Highland is also a developing resource for community interaction. The school's administration has expressed interest in serving as a community center for after hours activities and outdoor sports. The school is often available for use by various community groups, including the Near Heights Community Planning Partnership. These kinds of joint use opportunities are a priority for the City's administration as well.

#### KEY FINDINGS:

- Due to its diversity, the Near Heights is a collection of various elements rather than one homogeneous identity.
- Most Albuquerqueans recognize the Near Heights for its high levels of activity, diversity, and its large institutions.
- The Near Heights is also associated with high levels of crime, which is the one of the greatest threats to the positive identity and community spirit of the area.
- There are several opportunities currently available to help promote community identity and inter-community links.

### **Threats**

One of the greatest threats to a positive sense of identity in the Near Heights is the high rate of crime. While residents of other parts of town often associate all of the Near Heights with high rates of crime, crime maps show that much of the criminal activity is located along Central Avenue, and in two or three specific residential areas. However, crime was listed by community planning partnership members as one of the things they disliked most about the area. It is important to note too that Central Avenue bisects the entire width of the planning area, and therefore, criminal activity on that arterial severely impacts many adjacent neighborhoods. High crime or the perception of it can cause people to discontinue using public facilities and other outdoor areas. This can result in neighborhoods which do not foster community spirit or interaction.

### **What's Being Done**

The following projects which enhance community identity were recently completed, are underway, or have been funded in the Near Heights:

- Nob Hill Triangle Park/Police Mini-Substation
- Interstate Corridor Enhancement Project (Carlisle and I-25)
- Nob Hill Gateway Project (Central and Girard, Central and Washington)

- Yale Boulevard Streetscaping
- Sunport Boulevard Streetscaping
- Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Streetscaping
- Central Avenue Median Landscaping
- Indian School Road Medians and Landscaping

### **Opportunities**

The following situations provide opportunities for creating projects which can enhance the community identity of the Near Heights, and help link it to other community areas in Albuquerque:

- Purchase of the Hiland Theater site by ACLOA
- Streetscaping node on Central Avenue at Monroe
- Gibson Corridor – Extension Study and Improvements
- State Fair Improvements and Metropolitan Redevelopment Designation Study
- San Mateo 1% Art project and Sound Barrier
- UNM Masterplan
- Central Avenue Girard to Louisiana Revitalization Strategy ☐

## Transportation and Infrastructure

### ***Pedestrians, Bicycle Facilities, Transit/Traffic Capacity and Congestion***

- 11.4% of Near Heights housing units have no vehicle available to use. (Source: 1990 Census)
- For people in the Near Heights commuting to work, 7% walk, 3% use transit, 5% use bikes and other means, 12% carpool, and 70% travel alone by automobile to work. Only 3% work at home. (Source: 1990 Census)
- Some indicators of pedestrian unfriendliness in the UNM Main campus area are: No. of driveways (250), No. of curb ramps (287), No. of missing sidewalks/obstructions in the sidewalks (59). (Source: Sustainability Indicator Report).

The Near Heights contains several of the city's most concentrated pedestrian areas: UNM, T-VI, the State Fairgrounds, and Nob Hill. However, transit to, from, and between these areas can be

limited. Connections between Near Heights activity centers and activity centers in other planning areas (Old Town, Uptown) can also be difficult to use. With 21.6% of the residents in the area under eighteen years of age, and 13% over 65 years of age, good and efficient transit is an important issue for the Near Heights.

Residents of the Near Heights identify transit as a concern for them. The University Area and Nob Hill have demonstrated how desirable a pedestrian-friendly environment can be. In order to foster such an environment, transit is needed for transportation to and from areas where people can walk. Transit also assists lower-income residents, youth, and seniors in traveling to and from services and shopping. Residents of communities like Trumbull and La Mesa must often rely on transit for getting to and from jobs.

Some transit issues which residents have indicated they would like to see addressed in the Near Heights are: development of more pedestrian-friendly areas like Nob Hill, construction of more and better bus stops (particularly along Central Avenue), and stronger transit links

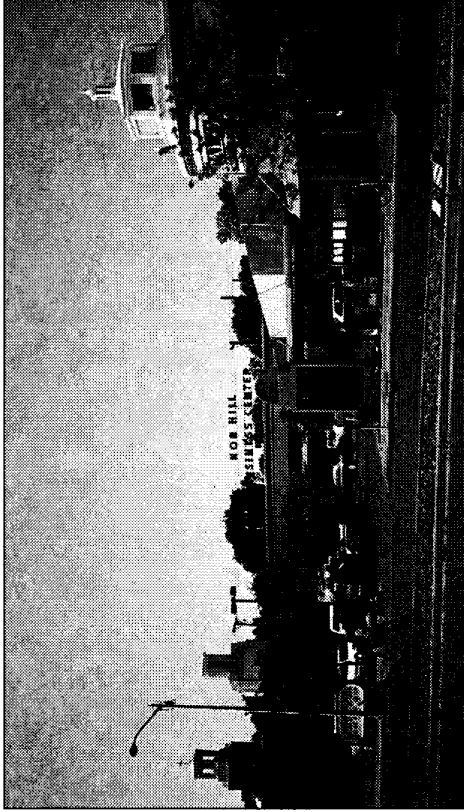
- [GOAL 3] For infrastructure, equitably balance new construction, maintenance and repair.
- [GOAL 4] Achieve sustainable development, and balanced development and redevelopment, including infill development

between activity areas in other parts of the city and UNM, Nob Hill, etc. (the Albuquerque Civic Light Opera Association has requested that the Central Avenue trolley route be extended to travel as far as Monroe and Central, in order to provide a connection between Old Town, Downtown, UNM, Nob Hill, and the HiLand Theater district.)

A draft analysis prepared by the City's Transit Department shows that residents and employees in the Near Heights' UNM-TV/Presbyterian Hospital-Nob Hill area are already using transit more than people in other parts of the city. For home to work trips, the Central Avenue corridor from Presbyterian Hospital to Nob Hill has a transit ridership average of 3.5%, while the citywide average is 1%. In census tract 16, the area immediately adjacent to Presbyterian Hospital, the average home to work transit ridership level climbs to 7% (Source: UNM-TV/Presbyterian Hospital-Nob Hill Alternative Transportation Study, Working Draft).

Concurrently, traffic levels along the same corridor are high – 32,000 to 38,000 trips on





*Nob Hill Center*

Central Avenue between I-25 and Carlisle Boulevard – and another report, the Transportation Evaluation Study (TES) projects that growth, and therefore traffic, will continue to increase over time. With the combination of a populace which is already more amenable to using public transit, and activity centers which are generating ever-increasing amounts of automobile traffic, the Near Heights would be a good candidate for focused attention to mass transit funding. By making transit along Central Avenue and between activity centers a priority, Albuquerque could link major amenities such as Central Albuquerque's Biopark, Downtown, and Old Town with the Near Heights' UNM, T-VI, Nob Hill, and Hiland Theater District (these sites given as examples only). This connection would give Albuquerqueans the option of a more urban lifestyle where work, home, and recreation are

near to each other and can be conveniently reached via public transit, bicycling and walking. It would also create an excellent corridor for tourism activity, bringing new revenues to the City and local businesses. Another project which can impact transit in the Near Heights is the Regional Transit Authority (RTA). This concept is still in the proposed stage. However, if adopted, it could provide new routes and services to all sections of Albuquerque, including the Near Heights.

### **Infrastructure Improvements**

Infrastructure in the Near Heights is another concern of partnership members. Many partnership members have discussed the deterioration of Near Heights facilities and streets. The key area which partnership members want to focus on is the section of Central Avenue between

Washington and San Pedro. This area has experienced a significant decline in street and sidewalk condition, weed and litter enforcement, and general upkeep and maintenance over the last twenty years. Elected officials, partnership members, and others in the community want to reverse this trend. Some infrastructure improvement activities are already occurring in the Hiland Theater district. These include:

- A streetscaping project at the intersection of Monroe and Central Avenue, in the Hiland Theater district;
- The purchase and ongoing remodeling of the Hiland Theater property; and
- A grassroots community effort aimed at deterring crime and unsightly code violations (The Silver Street Initiative).

However, there are still many challenges left for the Hiland Theater district, including how to formulate an economic revitalization plan in conjunction with infrastructure improvements. Please see the Commercial Revitalization section of this document for further details.

There are also several infrastructure projects in other parts of the Near Heights which are in various stages (design, construction, or recent completion):

- Design of an extension of existing streetscaping work eastward along Central Avenue to Louisiana;
- Design and construction of streetscaping along Gibson Boulevard from Broadway to Yale Boulevard;
- A study of the extension of the Gibson

Boulevard corridor east of Louisiana. This study is now also linked to the possibility of creating an overlay corridor plan for Gibson Boulevard east of I-25.

- The East Central Multi-Service Center serving the Trumbull and La Mesa areas;
- A new Community Center in Trumbull – the existing one will become a child development center.
- Streetscaping improvements to Yale and Sunport Blvds.

The balance between funding social services facilities (such as community centers) and funding infrastructure such as sewers, storm drains, street surfaces, sidewalks, etc. is important. As the demographic indicators given earlier in this report indicate, the Near Heights has a large population which needs social services. However, it also hosts a very high number of public and non-profit facilities geared toward providing those services. Partnership members have commented frequently on the appearance of sidewalks, medians, streets, and parks in the area. According to urban design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) experts, lower income areas of the Near Heights will benefit most from a combination of streetscaping, landscaping, improved sewers, pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and additional community centers and other social service oriented expenditures. However, during budget shortfalls, choices must be made, and Partnership members indicated that physical infrastructure improvements were their priority. City officials must weigh that recommendation against other information and make difficult spending decisions. ☐



*Streetscape on San Mateo Blvd.*

#### KEY FINDINGS:

- The Near Heights has more people using transit and walking than do most other parts of the city.
- Central Avenue, which bisects the Near Heights has a high daily traffic volume.
- Traffic volumes coupled with a relatively positive attitude on the part of residents about alternative transit make the Near Heights an ideal candidate for increased mass transit.
- The University Area and Nob Hill has shown Near Heights residents the desirability of pedestrian areas.
- The Near Heights partnership has identified declining infrastructure as an area-wide issue.
- The Near Heights partnership has identified Central Avenue between Washington and San Pedro as a focus area for improvements of several types.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The State Legislature has provided funding for the City to develop a commercial revitalization strategy along Central Avenue from Girard to Louisiana, including the Hiland Theater District and the State Fairgrounds. The strategy should look at economic development activities as well as improvements to

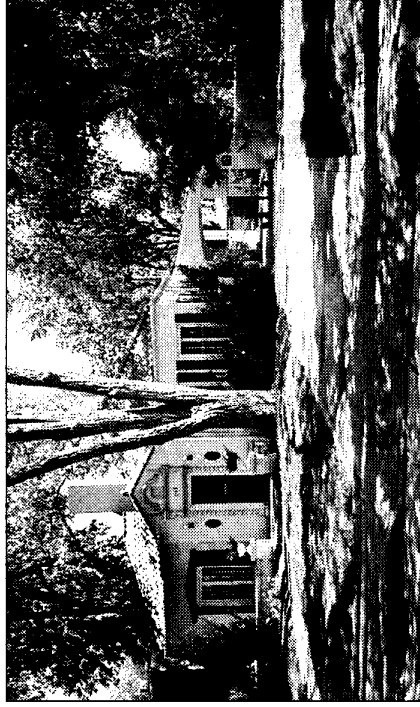
the built environment. Staff from the Planning Department and the Office of Economic

Development are working in conjunction with community members, other City staff, and an on-call economic revitalization consultant to develop the strategy. In conjunction with this effort, the City should begin funding infrastructure improvements for Central Avenue and the adjacent streets (Silver, Campus/Copper). These improvements can include replacing uneven and missing sidewalks, upgrading storm sewers, fixing street paving, replacing/upgrading light fixtures, etc.

- The City should design a "pedestrian overlay zone" for Central Avenue in the Near Heights; east-west boundaries to be determined. This overlay zone should address such issues as relationship of new/redeveloped buildings to the street, parking, sidewalk widths/paving/etc., bus stops and shelters, street crossings, ADA accessibility, curb cuts, etc.
- Related CIP Expenditures (approved 1997 G.O. Bond) Central Avenue Median Landscaping and Renovations \$500,000 East Central/Girard to San Mateo Project – Node #6 \$254,650 TOTAL \$754,650

[ Goal 1 ] Enhance the basic social contract by enhancing the lives of youth and seniors, supporting the family, fostering and maintaining stable neighborhoods and providing affordable housing.

[GOAL 4] Achieve sustainable development, and balanced development and redevelopment, including infill development.



House at Spruce Park

able to some Near Heights residents. Providing affordable housing which is safe and attractive is an important consideration for the area. Such housing also needs to provide prospective residents with various options in terms of leasing, purchasing, and level/type of subsidization. Community members at a HUD plan meeting indicated a great concern regarding the quality of affordable housing in the area, and expressed a sentiment that City staff seemed, conversely, concerned only with the quantity of affordable housing. Other neighborhood associations throughout the area have voiced similar concerns. The differences between these two viewpoints need to be considered in future housing projects within the area.

### **Housing Needs**

Analysis suggests there is an array of housing needs in the Near Heights. First, there is a need for housing rehabilitation programs which would provide resident homeowners with the opportunity to fix up aging properties. The Family and Com-

and the streets become more congested, housing near these desirable activities becomes more and more expensive. Many attracted to living in the Near Heights now discover that quality housing at an affordable price is harder to find than it used to be.

### **Rental and Affordable\* Housing**

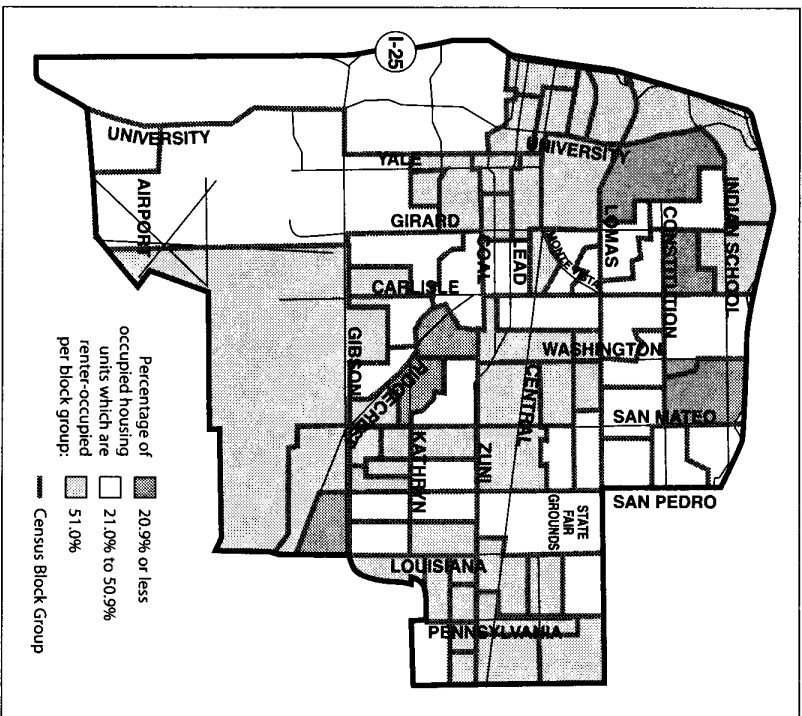
Often, substandard rental properties in high crime neighborhoods are the only options avail-

### **General Profile**

Housing stock in the Near Heights is as varied as the population. The area includes single family homes in the Ridgecrest neighborhood which sell for several hundred thousand dollars, small duplexes south of UNM, modest single family homes near the fairgrounds, and large apartment complexes on major arterials. Most of the housing in the area was built between 1925 and 1965. However, as activity centers such as UNM grow,

munity Services Department has incorporated \$2,000,000 for housing rehabilitation throughout the City into their Five-year Consolidated HUD Plan for 1998-2003. A portion of these monies would be available to qualifying homeowners in the Near Heights. The HUD plan also designates \$350,000 for the rehabilitation of rental properties citywide, over the next two years.

The second type of need relating to housing in the Near Heights suggests that alternate funding options for those families which qualify for low income housing would be useful. Programs which allow residents to purchase properties with little or no money down and reduced monthly payments give low income families the opportunity to gain equity in a home. The City might explore the option of making apartments and condominiums available for purchase by low income individuals and families. These smaller units with little or no yard space can be excellent ways for low income single parents, the elderly, and disabled to afford a property of their own. Owner-occupied property also contributes to neighborhood stability.



### Opportunities

The Near Heights could benefit from programs to provide incentives for innovative infill housing and/or mixed-use development. The University of New Mexico has begun exploring the option of building mixed-use, inter-generational, and affordable housing on land which it owns, primarily north of Lomas Boulevard, and west of University Boulevard. Residents of neighborhoods adjacent to the University indicated at

planning meetings that they were amenable to such developments in their proximity, provided the projects had high quality design and densities which were sensitive to the adjacent properties. If the City could offer incentives to private developers to construct similar projects throughout the Near Heights and other core urban planning areas, high quality affordable housing could be gained, as well as higher densities which would help support mass transit and reduce auto emissions. However, some neigh-

neighborhood representatives stress that incentives should not conflict with existing sector plans and zoning.

One large player in housing within the Near Heights is Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB). KAFB is one of eight bases undergoing a housing strategy. The strategy will identify ways to reduce costs for housing military personnel. Currently, KAFB and other bases provide a certain amount of housing on base for military personnel. The costs of maintaining that housing have become exorbitant, and one alternative being proposed in the housing strategy is to privatize the base housing. This possibility provides the City, private sector developers, and KAFB with the opportunity to work together to develop a joint housing project in the Near Heights. Officials from the Air Force have indicated that this possibility is worth pursuing, and that other municipalities have pursued similar options with adjacent Air Force bases.

### **Other Issues**

One final issue which impacts housing in the Near Heights is "non-conforming uses." When the City's first zone code was instituted, there were many existing uses (such as garage apartments and houses converted into multi-family units), which didn't conform to the newly imple-

mented zoning categories. City officials allowed those non-conforming uses to continue until the year 1999. With that deadline fast approaching, a decision regarding these properties has not yet been made. While there are various types of non-conforming uses throughout the city, the Near Heights contains a disproportionate number. The options for how to deal with non-conforming uses include: bringing the properties into compliance with the zone code; rezoning the properties; or implementing other regulatory changes as yet to be determined.

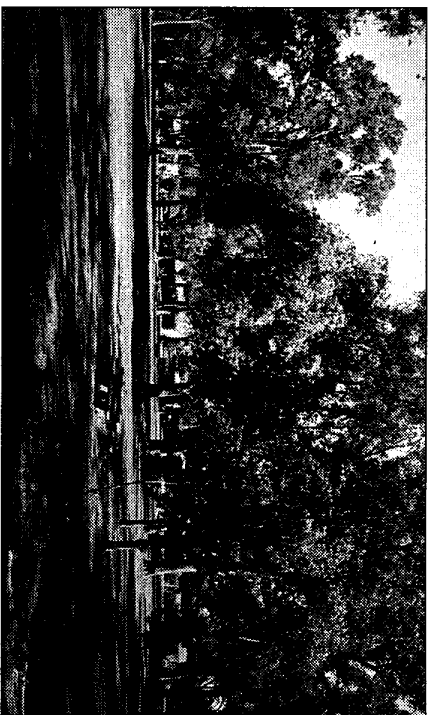
Many of the non-conforming use properties were constructed poorly, do not meet building codes, and are not maintained adequately. This means that rezoning the properties would result in an incredible expense for the City to send out code enforcement officers looking for violations. Property owners would also bear significant expenses making the necessary repairs. On the other hand, if the properties were brought into compliance, there would be the same sorts of expenses for the City to cite the properties, and for owners to demolish or convert the buildings. It is clear that there is no simple answer to this issue, and whatever the final decision is, it will greatly impact the availability and quality of housing in the Near Heights. ☐

*\* For the sake of this document, "affordable" is defined as any rental units constructed to serve those whose annualized income is at or below 65% of the area median family income for the City and any ownership units constructed to benefit those whose annualized income is at or below 80% of the area median family income for the City, as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and the percentage of whose gross monthly income paid towards housing is allowable by HUD standards. It does not refer to "alternative" housing which might also be called "affordable," i.e. single room occupancy motels, non-conforming use apartments, etc.*

### **KEY FINDINGS:**

- There is a wide variety of housing types in the Near Heights.
- Housing in the Near Heights has become relatively expensive.
- Residents are concerned about the quality of affordable housing in the area.
- Purchase options for low-income housing should be made available to Near Heights residents.
- The City should offer incentives for developers to construct higher density, alternative housing infill projects.

[ Goal 7 ] Foster the expression and appreciation of Albuquerque's cultures.



*Bartan Park*

### Cultural Venues

The Near Heights is home to many of the city's most popular cultural venues, and along with Central Albuquerque is probably the most culturally active of any of the planning areas. A brief inventory of these cultural facilities/amenities includes:

- **UNM's Popejoy Hall:** concerts, plays, and musical productions

- **UNM's Rodey Theatre:** small musical productions, experimental productions
- **UNM's Keller Hall:** dance productions and recitals
- **Vortex Theatre:** locally produced productions
- **Highland Theatre:** ACLQA productions, special local and touring performances
- **NM State Fairgrounds:** annual State Fair, large concerts, rodeos, special festivals such

as wine tastings, circuses, etc.

- **Lobo and Guild movie theatres:** first-run foreign and alternative films, special events such as Academy Awards night
- **Ethnic restaurants:** Thai, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Jamaican, Vietnamese, Mexican, Greek, Middle Eastern, etc.
- **Ethnic and specialty grocery stores:** La Montanita Coop, Farmer's Market, Tao Lin Market, etc.
- **UNM's Maxwell Museum:** rotating exhibits, origins of man, history of New Mexico
- **UNM's Tamarind Institute:** internationally known lithography studio
- **Ernie Pyle House and Library:** Historic Landmark, home of world-famous writer Ernie Pyle
- **WPA Buildings:** Monte Vista Fire Station Restaurant, Jefferson Middle School, Monte Vista Elementary School, Old Airport Building, Heights Community Center.

### Recreational Facilities

The Near Heights also has a variety of recreational facilities, including:

- **UNM Campus:** duck pond and park area, outdoor playing fields, paths for rollerblading, running, etc., tennis courts, basketball courts, Johnson Gymnasium (limited access for general public)
- **North Campus Golf Course:** popular running trails as well as golf
- **Iceland Arena:** ice skating and indoor soccer facilities
- **Several City trails and bikeways**
- **Six community centers** with basketball courts, game rooms, etc.
- **Thirteen schools** with playground equipment, basketball courts, etc.

### **Parks Facilities\***

The Near Heights has a number of neighborhood parks, many of which are known citywide, and have historic connections. Those parks range in acreage from one to eight acres, and include nine play areas, two game fields, three jogging paths, twelve unlit tennis courts, eight full basketball courts, seven half basketball courts, and one out door swimming pool. Near Heights neighborhood parks include:

*Altura Park, Alvarado Park, Bataan Park, Fox Park, Hermosa Green North Park, Hyder Park, Kirtland Park, La Mesa Elementary School Park, Lassetter Park, Laurel Circle Park, Mc Duffie Park, Netherwood Park, Ridgecrest Park, Ross Park, Spruce Park, Summit Park, Tom Bolack Urban Forest Park, Trumbull Children's Park, Wellesley Park, Whittier Park, Wilson Park, and Zia Elementary School Park.*

There are eighteen community parks in the Near Heights, ranging in size from one to forty-four acres. Facilities found in community parks include eight play areas, six lit ballfields, eleven game fields, one jogging path, six unlit tennis courts, ten full basketball courts, seven half basketball courts, four community centers, one outdoor swimming pool, one indoor swimming pool, and one par course. Community parks in the Near Heights are:

*Bandelier Elementary School Park,  
Del Sol Park, Highland High School Park,  
Korean War Veterans Park, Lowell Elementary School Park, Mesa Verde Park, Morningside Park, Phil Chacon Park, Roosevelt Park,  
San Mateo Linear Park, Sunport Park,  
Tom Bell Park, Trumbull Park, and U.S.S. Bullhead Memorial Park.*

Those Near Heights facilities which the City classifies as "regional" parks are the Albuquerque Sports Complex, the Albuquerque Tennis Complex, and the Puerto Del Sol Golf Course.

### **Recent Parks Projects\***

Parks projects recently completed, currently in progress, or recently funded in the Near Heights include: Altura Park renovation, Bataan Park renovation, Hyder Park renovation, Kirtland Park renovation, Korean Veterans Memorial Phase I, Mesa Verde tennis resurfacing, Nob Hill Triangle Park Phase II, Phil Cacon Veterans Memorial Phase III, U.S.S Bullhead Park, Whittier Park Site renovation, and Zia Park renovation.

### **Future Parks Planning\***

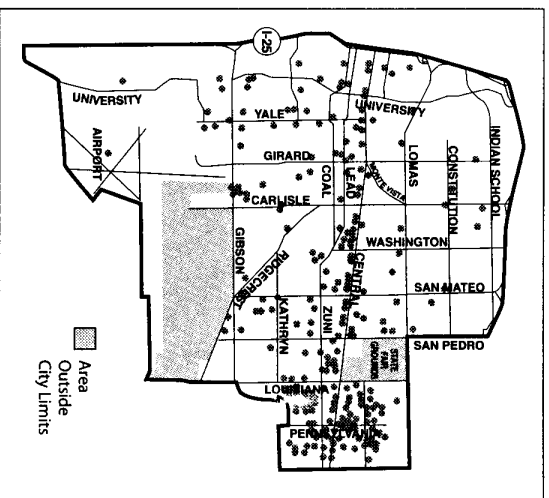
Also currently in progress is the development of a Public Information Document which will describe general information about park, open space and trail development processes in the City of Albuquerque and related issues including general cost information and typical funding sources. Upon completion of this document a more detailed planning process will proceed in each community planning area. Meetings will be held with individual community planning partnerships to gather public input about existing parks, open space and trail facilities as well as to determine future needs within each area.

Two plans have been adopted which guide the development of trail and bicycle facilities in Albuquerque: the Trails and Bikeways Facility Plan and the Bikeways Master Plan. To guide the acquisition and development of Open Space, the Open Space Facility Plan is in the process of adoption (completion expected in 1998). □

\* The information regarding parks, open space, and trails (POST) was provided and written by POST staff.

### **KEY FINDINGS:**

- The Near Heights is very active culturally, and contains several of the city's best-known cultural facilities.



Reported Narcotics Crimes in 1996

### Perceptions of Crime

Only slightly more than 30% of Near Heights residents felt “very safe” in their community, according to the 1997 Sustainability Indicators Report. Like most central urban areas, the Near Heights grapples with a variety of types of serious crime. Trumbull and La Mesa, the area’s two poorest neighborhoods have been saddled for years with the moniker of “The War Zone,” a statement about the high numbers of drug-related gun battles and murders which had occurred

there. Other neighborhoods in the area struggle with vandalism, petty theft, and burglaries. Residents and business owners from throughout the planning area indicate that diminishing the perception that the Near Heights is a hotbed of crime is one of the most important issues to them. Trumbull and La Mesa neighbors have pleaded with the press and City officials NOT to use the term “war zone,” and residents of the Federation of University Neighborhoods resent the term “student ghetto” applied to the areas south of UNM.

### Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Programs

Some innovative approaches to dealing with crime in the area are already being pursued by neighborhoods and the City, including Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), which was initiated as a Community Planning program. Ten neighborhoods throughout the city were selected by the Mayor and City Council as needing unique intervention in order to reduce the number of violent and drug-related crimes they experience. Three of those neighborhoods are located in the Near Heights. Trumbull, La Mesa, and Kirtland Addition have all gone through the process of numerous training sessions, neighborhood meetings, and collaborative planning with City staff in order to implement physical and social changes designed to prevent crime. Trumbull was the pilot neighborhood for the CPTED program, and has undergone the installation of traffic calming devices such as speed humps and street diverters, changes in solid waste service, community events such as Herman Wrice marches, and training for



landlords in how to screen tenants and manage safe properties.

While only Trumbull, La Mesa, and Kirtland Addition are eligible for full CPTED analysis, other areas in the Near Heights have begun to utilize some of the concepts of CPTED. Proposals including lighting, traffic calming, utilization of public spaces, and visual permeability of walls and fences are being examined for application in the Near Heights. Businesses and residents in the Nob Hill/Highland neighborhoods have organized the Silver Street Initiative to combat cruising, prostitution and drug sales along and near the Central Avenue corridor between Carlisle and Washington. The Silver Street Initiative is in the process of getting street barricades erected, irresponsible property owners punished, and general code violations corrected. City staff in the Public Works, Planning, Police, and Family and Community Services Departments have helped the Silver Street Initiative participants learn more about CPTED concepts, and follow City procedures in order to accomplish their objectives.

As part of effectively disseminating the concepts of CPTED, the City should consider changing the name to "Livable Communities through Environmental Design" (LCED). This new name better communicates the multiple opportunities which the CPTED philosophy can facilitate. LCED/CPTED should be institutionalized in the City's design review processes wherever possible. LCED/CPTED review of public and private projects could be incorporated into the City's Development

Processes Manual (DPM), and cases could be regularly reviewed for adherence to LCED/CPTED concepts.

### ***Community Policing Initiative***

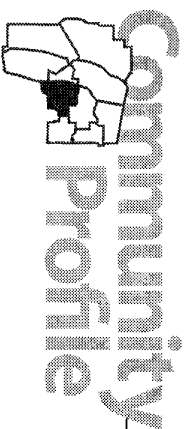
The Albuquerque Police Department has also begun implementing Community Policing city-wide. In the Near Heights, there are numerous police officers at community planning partnership meetings, neighborhood meetings, CPTED workshops, public forums, etc. There has been an obvious effort on the part of officers and command at the Phil Chacon substation to be involved in the community. The full effects of Community Policing will not be seen for some time, but it is helping police and neighborhoods become more familiar with one another. ☐

#### **KEY FINDINGS:**

- Fewer than one third of Near Heights residents feel safe in their neighborhoods.
- There is a public perception that the Near Heights suffers from high crime.
- Innovative techniques for combating crime, such as CPTED are being used in the Near Heights.
- Community Policing is having a positive impact in the Near Heights.
- Condition and appearance of the community and involvement of the citizens are integral to increasing safety in the Near Heights Community.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The concepts of CPTED should be used as widely as possible.
- The City should consider changing the name of CPTED to "Livable Communities through Environmental Design" (LCED). This new name better communicates the multiple opportunities which the CPTED philosophy can facilitate. LCED/CPTED should be institutionalized in the City's design review processes wherever possible.
- Related Expenditures (approved 1997 G.O Bond) Triangle Park Police Mini-substation/Central and Monte Vista \$178,255.



## Community, Business, and Job Development

- [ Goal 4 ] Achieve sustainable development, and balanced development and redevelopment, including infill development.
- [ Goal 6 ] Adopt and pursue implementation of an economic vitality strategy.

### ***Employment***

Many of the City's largest institutions are located in the Near Heights, and they supply many of the area jobs. These institutions include: The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute, Sandia National Labs, Kirtland Air Force Base, Lovelace Hospital, Presbyterian Hospital, University Hospital, and the State Fairgrounds. There are also numerous neighborhood-scale businesses, schools, and public facilities such as community centers which offer employment opportunities.

New institutional employers might be possible for the Near Heights as well. The Public Works Department has been conducting a study of the Gibson Boulevard Corridor Extension, which would extend Gibson Boulevard east from Louisiana to Juan Tabo. This extension would link up with an area directly adjacent to the Near Heights in the East Gateway planning area. That area is being considered as possible space for a new high tech research and development park. The extended Gibson Boulevard would then tra-

verse the entire width of the Near Heights planning area, and would connect the UNM South Research Park on University Boulevard with the proposed high tech research and development park in the East Gateway area. Gibson Boulevard would then be further developed as a major economic corridor for both the Near Heights and the city as a whole.

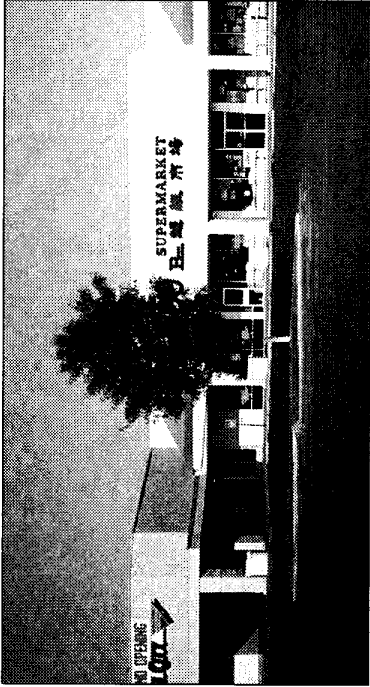
### ***Economic Redevelopment/Revitalization***

The Near Heights is home to two of the city's most vital neighborhood commercial districts (the University Area and Nob Hill). However, there are still many commercial sections of the area which are suffering from inactivity and deterioration. What used to be neighborhood commercial centers have become abandoned strip centers with few or no pedestrian connections to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Revitalization of these commercial zones is necessary for a variety of reasons. First, nearby shopping will allow residents to reduce the number of car trips they must take, thus decreasing traffic congestion

and air pollution. Secondly, declining commercial areas become a blight on the adjacent neighborhoods. As physical facilities worsen in condition, less and less desirable businesses occupy them. The traffic associated with these businesses spills over, and then residential decline begins.

Albuquerque has had limited success with revitalizing corridor/commercial districts. The University Area and Nob Hill are unique case studies, and other efforts, primarily in Downtown, have not been as successful. The physical layout of Nob Hill is unique, and it can not be replicated in other parts of the city, nor on adjacent sections of Central Avenue. However, the City needs to explore ways to revitalize other commercial districts, possibly retrofitting them for uses other than strictly commercial.

In looking for ways and opportunities to enhance revitalization, however, the City needs to keep in mind certain related issues. For instance, revitalized areas require a great deal of maintenance. Infrastructure must be kept up and services need to be upgraded. The costs associ-



Tao Lin Market

ated with this maintenance should be factored into revitalization projects, and both the private sector and the public sector need to bear some of the burden.

Other cities have had great success with renewing aging commercial zones. Generally, this renewal involves improvements to the public spaces along with improvements to the private spaces and the organizing of merchants. San Diego is an example of how this combined effort can have great success. The city began its Office of Small Business (OSB) in 1992. Since then, the office has developed a multifaceted set of programs for reinforcing the role of small business as an integral part of the city's economic development strategy (Source: *PAS Memo, June 1997*).

The OSB currently operates fourteen programs which assist approximately 50,000 small businesses in San Diego. Revenues come from a variety of sources, including business license fees, special assessment districts, and grants. The

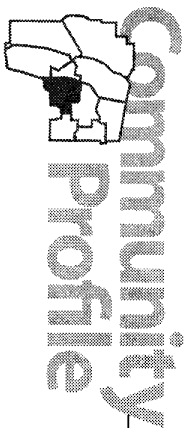
most ambitious of the programs is the Business Improvement District (BID). BIDs are special assessment districts for neighborhood commercial areas. There are sixteen BIDs in San Diego. BIDs are formed when a group of local business owners petition the city to form a BID. The city council needs to approve the intention to form the BID, and then the proposal is circulated amongst all of the affected businesses. Then two public hearings are held, and unless written protests are received from business owners who would be assessed more than half of the total assessments to be collected, the city council approves the BID.

Once the BID is approved, fees can be assessed (usually determined by business type, size, and location), and the businesses can participate in a variety of programs funded through their monies. Programs include: cooperative advertising, workshops, and recently, the citywide

mainstreet program. The mainstreet program is committed to four major initiatives: organization, design, promotion, and economic restructuring. BIDs have linked with the mainstreet program to implement these ideas through community partnerships, facade improvement programs, community events, and new business recruitment. These efforts combined with streetscaping and infrastructure improvements have created a number of vital, neighborhood commercial areas in the downtown and inner ring of San Diego. It is interesting to note that San Diego's inner ring of development is similar to the Near Heights in age, building styles, and amenities. □  
(Source: *PAS Memo, June 1997*)

#### KEY FINDINGS:

- Although the Near Heights is home to the Nob Hill commercial area, there are many other commercial zones which are in decline, especially along Central Ave.
- In order to enhance quality of life, and protect adjacent neighborhoods, it is necessary to revitalize these aging commercial districts.
- Other cities have accomplished such revitalization through a combination of improvements to public spaces, private spaces, and business organizing.



## Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation

[ Goal 5 ] Increase environmental protection and resource conservation.

### **Air Quality**

While Near Heights Partnership members did not list any environmental issues as priorities, there are several which should be monitored. One of the most obvious environmental threats to the Near Heights is air pollution, which is exacerbated by the ever increasing numbers of cars. While cars are being built to produce less waste, greater utilization of public transit will help as well. The Near Heights' air quality would also benefit from an increase in the number of trees, which help clean the air. The City should try to plant more street trees whenever feasible (keeping in mind such issues as water usage), as they upgrade arterials and sidewalks.

### **Water and Resource Conservation**

The age of existing trees are also a problem for the Near Heights. As many of the varieties of trees which were originally planted in the area reach the end of their lifespans, the area faces the threat of being left with very reduced vegetation. Replacements for these older trees should be planned, and both private property owners and the City will need to commit resources for that reforestation.

Finally, the Near Heights, like the city as a whole, needs to become more aware of water conservation and management. Whenever possible, there should be a shift from traditional to low-water use plants, and the City should continue to promote the water conservation campaign and incentives to homeowners who xeriscape and utilize low water plumbing fixtures. However, Partnership members indicated that in a dense core urban area like the Near Heights, maintenance of existing parks and the addition of "pocket" parks wherever possible should be a priority as well.

### **Visual Pollution**

Visually, the Near Heights is a conglomeration of the beautiful and the terrible. The area has many wonderful buildings and some noteworthy streetscapes like Ridgcrest Boulevard. However, it is also besieged by weed and litter, sidewalks in disrepair, potholes, and unattractive strip malls. This visual pollution greatly decreases the area's sense of community spirit and identity. Finding ways to enhance the built environment and enforce codes which deal with visual appearance is very important to the Near Heights long-term well-being.

### **Historic Preservation**

As was previously mentioned, the Near Heights is home to many historic properties and resources. Parks, houses, commercial districts, and roadways which are significant examples of earlier times must be preserved and enhanced. As a city which has experienced a great deal of growth during the last twenty-five years, Albuquerque has less in the way of historic character than do many other cities. It is very important that we place a high value on the historic places we do have. For more information on historic preservation and historic properties in Albuquerque, contact Ed Boles at 924-3860.

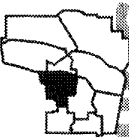
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**Summary of  
Partnership Issues**

**The Near Heights  
Community's  
Priority Issues**

# Summary of Partnership Issues



**T**he Near Heights Community Partnership met for nearly a year, discussing issues and conditions in the community. They also conducted a bus tour of the area, and filled out a questionnaire which is summarized below. The group identified Central Avenue from Washington to San Pedro as their priority project area. They then determined that the area had a great need for corridor/commercial revitalization. Recently, the City received \$125,000 in State funds to develop an economic revitalization strategy for Central Avenue from Girard to Louisiana, and the first community meeting of that project has been held.

The following is the list of questions and answers which led to the Near Heights Community Partnership's priority issues. These priority issues primarily relate to Goals 1 and 6 of the City's Five Year Goals and Objectives:

*If I could change just one thing about my community it would be...*

- zone change to increase single-family dwellings
- high percentage of rentals
- promote enforcement of ordinances already on the books

*The single greatest problem in my community is...*

- lack of usable public transportation
- deterioration, and vacancies in businesses
- general deterioration

*If I had 10 million dollars to spend in my community, I would spend it on...*

- half on infrastructure and half on beautification
- clean-up and maintenance of sidewalks, curbs, trees, and streetscapes
- create a revolving fund to hire young people to rehabilitate old homes and businesses

*The single best thing about my community is...*

- people willing to help
- diversity

*The best activity in my community is...*

- ACLOA buying the Hiland Theatre
- Bag-a-thon

*The people in my community make me proud because...*

- There is a core group of concerned individuals
- I am generally not proud of people in my community. Business people and landlords do not value the quality of life here.
- In spite of congestion, my neighbors are friendly and cooperative.

*Priority Issues:*

- Commercial/Corridor Revitalization
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Code Enforcement

☐

In addition to identifying corridor/commercial revitalization, neighborhood revitalization, code enforcement, and infrastructure improvements as priority issues, the Near Heights Community Planning Partnership identified the area of Central Avenue between Washington and San Pedro as the key area in which they wanted to work. In addition, many Partnership and community members named the pedestrian amenities of the University Area and Nob Hill as assets they would like to see repeated elsewhere. Owing to these priorities, and the goals and objectives of the City of Albuquerque, this document has recommended that the following items be examined by the City Council and the Mayor:

### ***Corridor Revitalization/ Pedestrian Orientation***

#### **Key Findings:**

- The Near Heights has more people using transit and walking than do most other parts of the city.
- Central Avenue, which bisects the Near Heights has a high daily traffic volume.
- Traffic volumes coupled with a relatively positive attitude on the part of residents about alternative transit make the Near Heights an ideal candidate for increased mass transit.
- The University Area and Nob Hill have shown Near Heights residents the desirability of pedestrian areas.
- The Near Heights partnership has identified declining infrastructure as an area-wide issue.
- The Near Heights partnership has identified Central Avenue between Washington and San Pedro as a focus area for improvements of several types.

**Recommendation:** The State Legislature has provided funding for the City to develop a corridor revitalization strategy along Central Avenue from Girard to Louisiana, focusing on the Hiland

Theatre District and the State Fair Grounds. The strategy should look at economic revitalization activities as well as improvements to the built environment. Staff from the Planning Department and the Office of Economic Development are working in conjunction with other City staff and an on-call economic revitalization consultant to develop the strategy. In conjunction with this effort, the City should begin funding infrastructure improvements for Central Avenue and the adjacent streets (Silver, Campus/Copper). These improvements can include uneven and missing sidewalks, storm sewers, street paving, light fixtures, etc.

**Recommendation:** The City should design a "pedestrian overlay zone" for Central Avenue in the Near Heights, east-west boundaries to be determined. This overlay zone should address such issues as relationship of new/redeveloped buildings to the street, parking, sidewalk widths/paving/etc., bus stops and shelters, street crossings, ADA accessibility, curb cuts, etc.

**Related CIP Expenditures** (approved 1997 G.O. Bond)  
 Central Avenue Median Landscaping and Renovations \$500,000  
 East Central /Girard to San Mateo Project – Node #6 \$254,650  
 TOTAL \$754,650

## **Crime**

### **Key Findings:**

- Fewer than one third of Near Heights residents feel safe in their neighborhoods.
- There is a public perception that the Near Heights suffers from high crime.
- Innovative techniques for combating crime, such as CPTED are being used in the Near Heights.
- Community Policing is having a positive impact in the Near Heights.
- Condition and appearance of the community and involvement of the citizens are integral to increasing safety in the Near Heights Community.

### **Recommendation:**

The Near Heights and other areas of town have many neighborhoods besieged by crime. However, Police Department staff, along with staff from several other departments, including Planning, Family and Community Services, and Public Works have been testing innovative ways of fighting the crime in these neighborhoods. One such concept is Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Currently, the City has ten designated CPTED neighborhoods. Perception and crime statistics are showing that

in neighborhoods where CPTED has been initiated, crime rates are decreasing. While not every neighborhood in Albuquerque can or should receive full-scale CPTED planning and implementation, the concepts of CPTED should be used as widely as possible.

As part of effectively disseminating the concepts of CPTED, the City should consider changing the name to "Liveable Communities through Environmental Design" (LCED). This new name better communicates the multiple opportunities which the CPTED philosophy can facilitate. LCED/CPTED should be institutionalized in the City's design review processes wherever possible. LCED/CPTED review of public and private projects could be incorporated into the City's Development Processes Manual (DPM), and cases could be regularly reviewed for adherence to LCED/CPTED concepts.

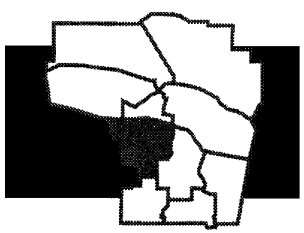
### **Related Expenditures:**

(approved 1997 G.O. Bond) Triangle Park Police Mini-Substation/ Central and Monte Vista \$178,255

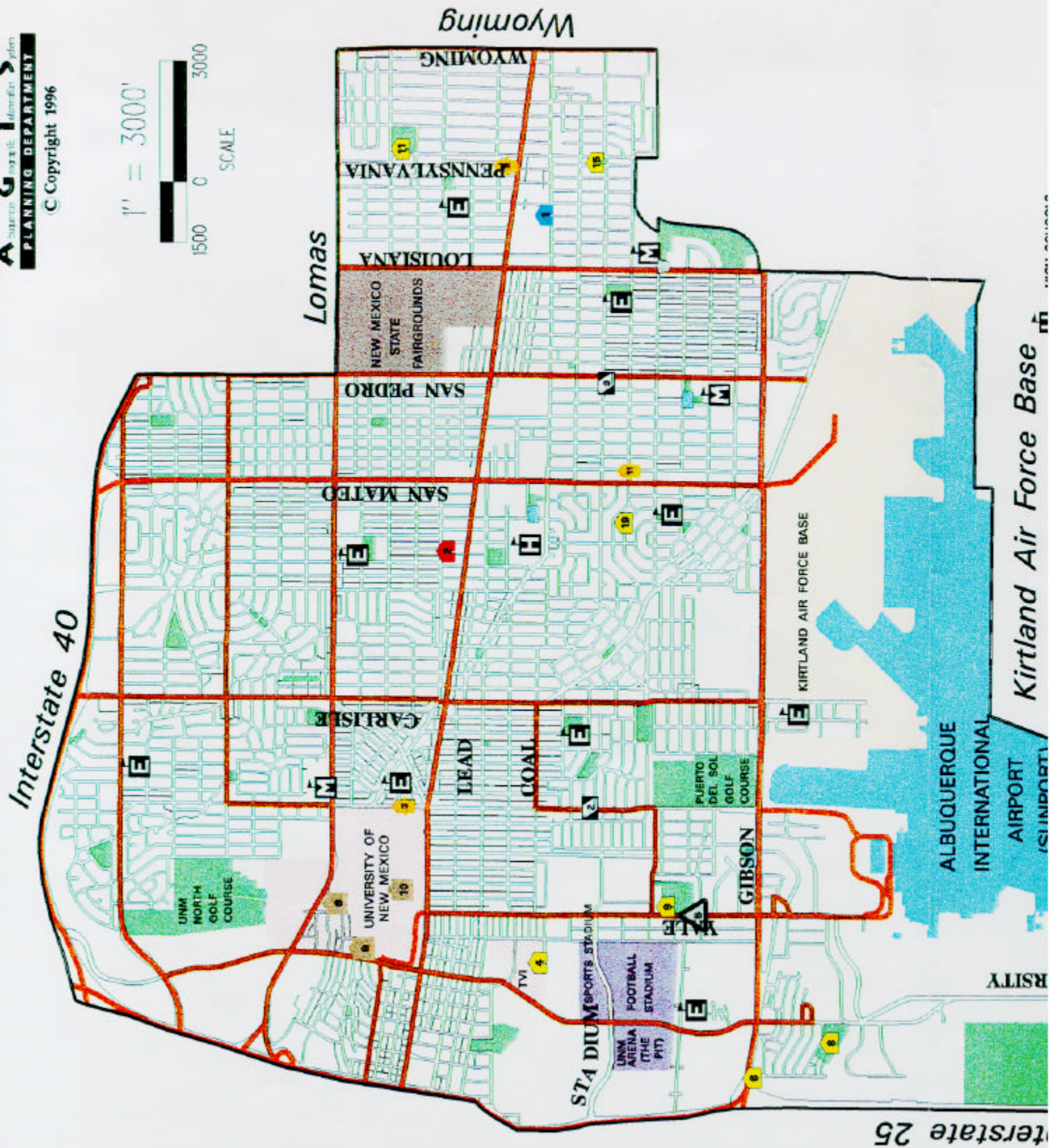
## **Neighborhood Revitalization**

One final issue which has been identified by the Partnership is the need for neighborhood revitalization. While that issue has not been directly discussed in this Blueprint, several related issues have been. Neighborhood revitalization seems to need a combination of several targeted actions, including: additional code enforcement, possible revision of certain codes, resolution of the non-conforming uses issue, updating and reinforcement of existing sector plans, revitalization of adjacent commercial corridors, crime reduction, etc. Therefore, all of the recommendations in this document could be viewed as geared towards neighborhood revitalization. This "package" of actions helps provide residents with liveable neighborhoods, and helps the Near Heights further its reputation for being Albuquerque's model of urban vitality. ☐





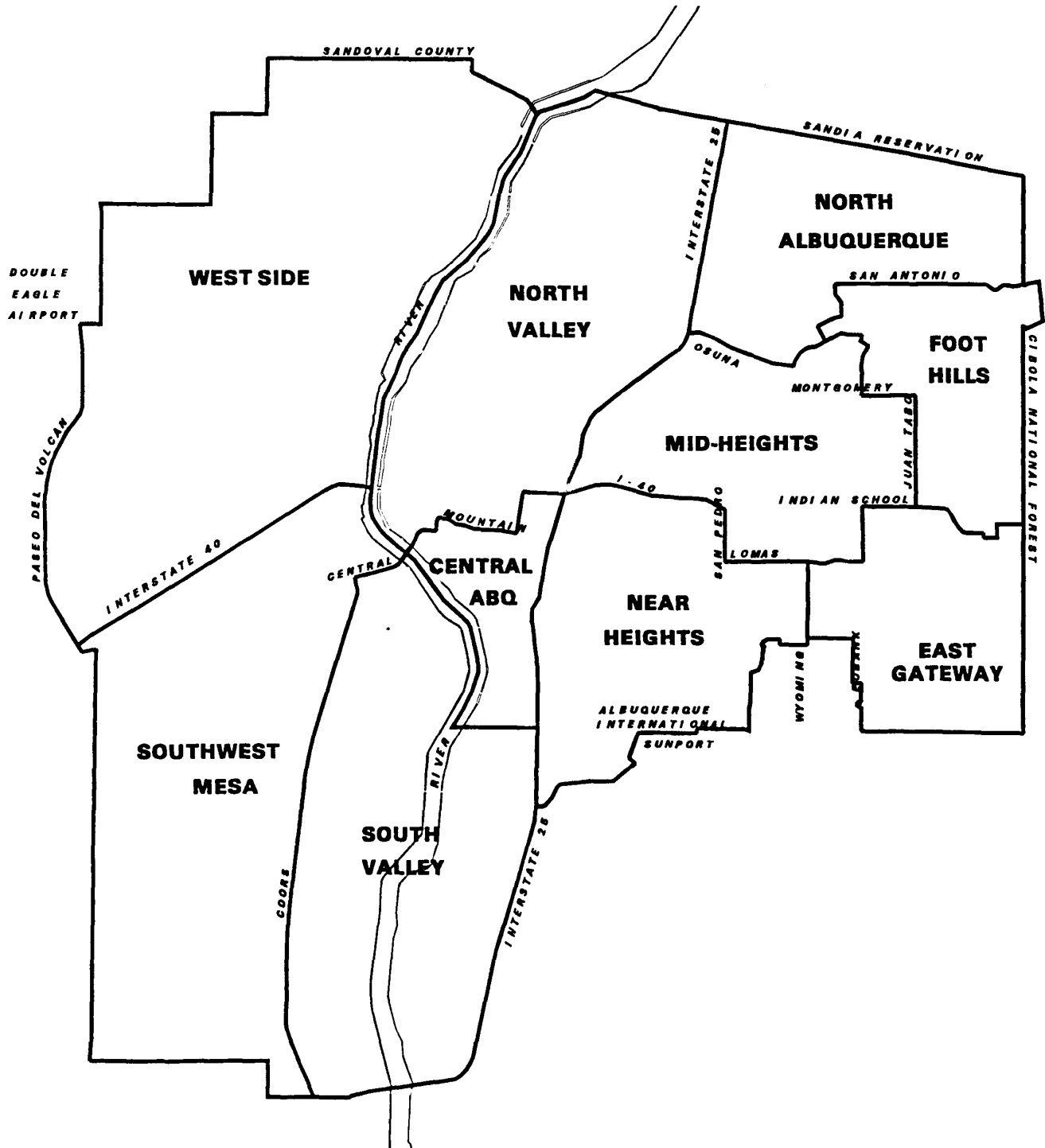
## Appendices







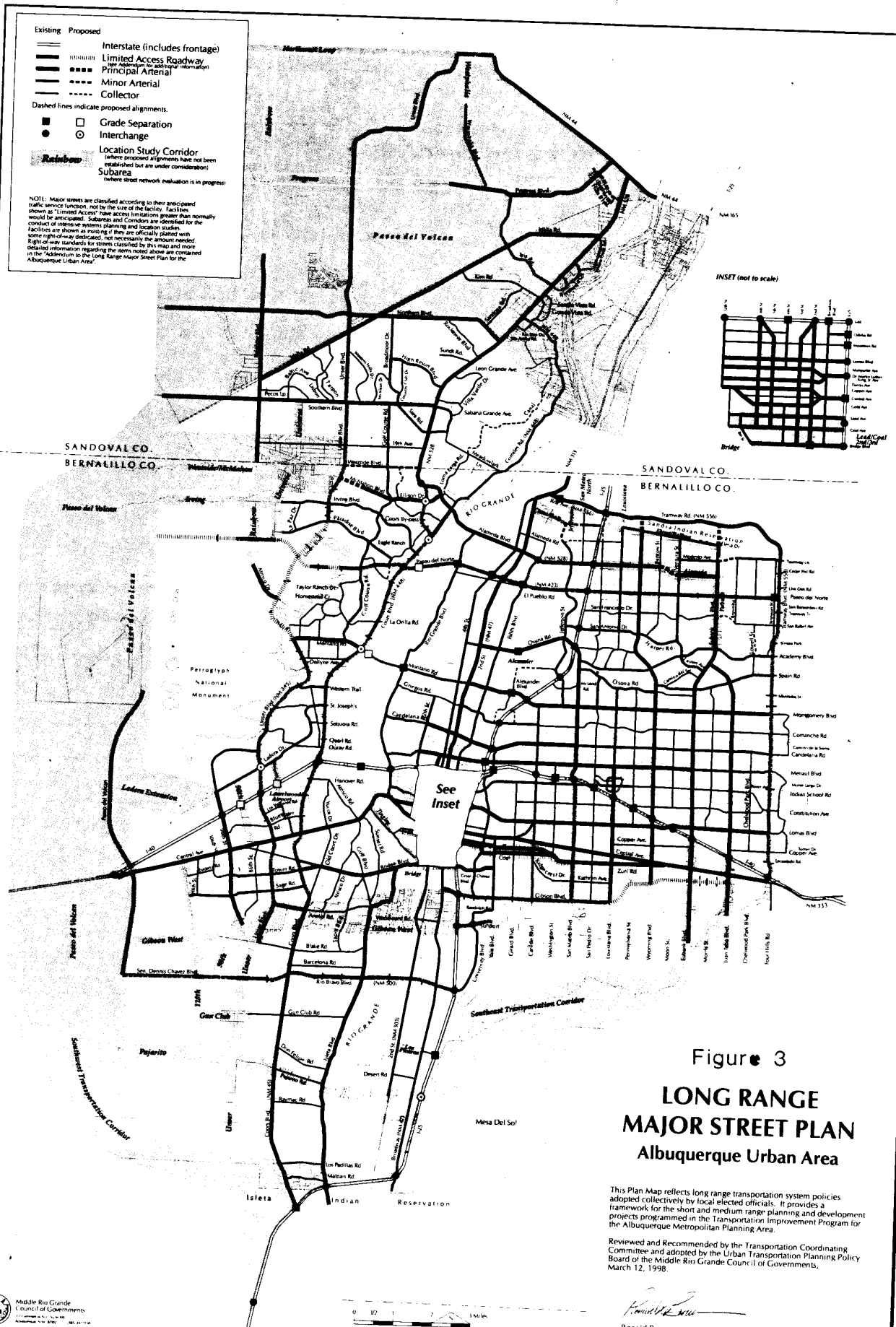
# COMMUNITY PLANNING AREAS

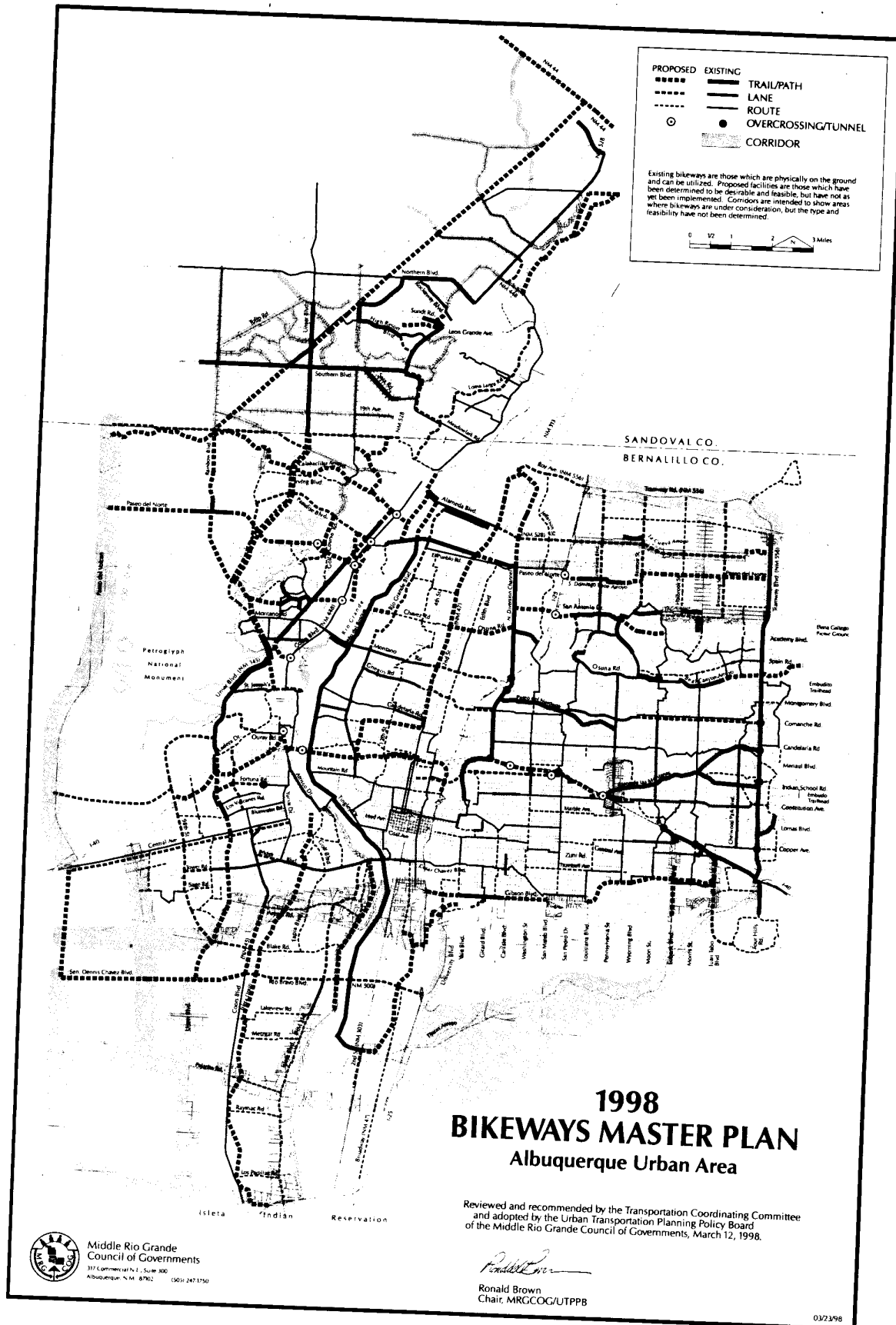


**CITY OF**  
**Albuquerque**

**A**lbuquerque **G**eographic **I**nformation **S**ystem  
**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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# Approved 1997 G.O. Program Near Heights

**Map  
Location**

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<b>Family and Community Services</b> <u>Albuquerque Development Services</u>		
55	State Fair Streetscape	\$75,000
56	State Fair Area Renovation 1	\$500,000
12b	Center Exp., Enhanc. & Upgrade - Cesar Chavez Comm. Center	\$250,000
12g	Center Exp., Enhanc. & Upgrade - Mesa Verde Comm. Center	\$160,000
12h	Center Exp., Enhanc. & Upgrade - Loma Linda Community Center	\$90,000
<b>Fire</b>		
53a	Station Rehabilitation - Station #3	\$70,000
53h	Station Rehabilitation - Station #11	\$250,000
<b>Parks and General Services</b> <u>Parks</u>		
19d	Park Renovation - Fox Memorial Park	\$50,000
19f	Park Renovation - Hyder Park	\$300,000
19h	Park Renovation - Kirtland Park	\$250,000
19i	Park Renovation - Netherwood Park Design	\$40,000
20	Trail Renovation - Paseo del Noreste (NDC to Pennsylvania)	\$100,000
21d	Park Development - Phil Chacon Park	\$300,000
27b	Median Landscaping and Renovation - Central Avenue Medians	\$500,000
57	Phil Chacon Park - Veteran's Memorial Facility	\$430,000
<b>Public Works</b> <u>Storm Drainage</u>		
29	Avenida Cesar Chavez Storm Drain, Phase II	\$1,400,000
<b>Public Works</b> <u>Streets</u>		
63	Gibson Blvd.	\$450,000
43	Lead- Coal Avenues Improvements	\$250,000

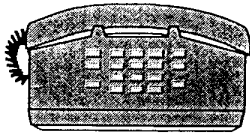
## Approved 1997 G.O. Program Near Heights

**Map  
Location**

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<b>46c</b>	Trails and Bikeways - Gibson, Carlisle to Yale	\$166,000
<b>Neighborhood CIP Projects</b> <u>Neighborhood Set Aside</u>		
<b>49h</b>	San Mateo and Lomas Streetscape Design	\$50,000
<b>49k</b>	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave. Streetscape Improvements	\$150,000
<b>49p</b>	Gibson Blvd. Median Landscaping	\$120,000
<b>49j</b>	Civic Gateways Action Plan	\$100,000
<b>49m</b>	Avenida Cesar Chavez Median Landscaping	\$200,000
<b>Urban Enhancement Trust Fund</b> <u>Capital Projects</u>		
<b>50a</b>	East Central/Girard to San Mateo Project - Node #6	\$254,650
<b>50c</b>	Triangle Park / Central and Monte Vista	\$178,255
<b>50e</b>	Coal and University Landscaping Project	\$36,693





## IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS (4/98)

*TTY USERS: May call any number listed through Relay New Mexico at  
1-800-659-8331.*

*Published by: **City of Albuquerque, Department  
of Family & Community Services, Office of  
Neighborhood Coordination.** (feel free to reprint for your publication).*

**Police/Fire/Rescue (Emergency) 911**

Albuquerque Clean Team (ACT) 823-4228

Albuquerque Police Department

Crime Analysis Section

768-3282

Police (non-emergency) 242-2677

Police Substations:

Foothills 823-4455

Northeast (8201 Osuna NE) 823-4455

Southeast (800 Louisiana SE) 256-2050

Valley (5408 2nd St. NW) 761-8800

Westside (6404 Los Volcanes NW) 831-4705

Records 768-2020

Telephone Reporting Unit 768-2030

Animal Control (Eastside) 768-1975

Animal Control (Westside) 768-1935

Animal Control (County) 873-6706

Attorney General (Consumer Protection) 1-800-678-1508

Better Business Bureau 884-0500

Burn/No-Burn Advisory 768-2876

City Council Office 768-3100

City Council Hotline (Mtgs., agendas) 768-4777

City/County Information 768-2000

Community Planning 924-3860

County Assessor (Property Ownership) 768-4040

County Clerk (Voter Registration) 768-4090

County Commission Office 768-4000

Crimestoppers 843-7867

Dumping on Vacant Lots 924-3850

Environmental Health Offices 768-2600

(for Mosquito/Fly Spraying, Noisy Neighbors, Noise, Restaurant, Food Poisoning Complaints,

Dust

complaints from Construction.)

Fire (Non-Emergency) 243-6601

Fire Marshal's Office 888-8124

Firecrackers or Gunshots 242-2677

Garbage Collection Problems 761-8100

Gas Leaks (Days) 246-7474

(Nights, Weekends, Holidays) 880-7300

Graffiti Removal Services 857-8055

Graffiti 24 Hour Hotline 768-4725

Housing Code Enforcement 764-3959

Keep Albuquerque Beautiful (KAB) 857-8280

Landfill Information

Cerro Colorado 836-8764

Don Reservoir 836-8757

Eagle Rock 857-8318

Montessa Park 873-6607

Landlord/Tenant Hotline 256-9442

Library (Information &amp; Reference) 768-5140

Mayor's/CAO Office 768-3000

Mediation 768-4651

Neighborhood Coordination	768-3790
	Neighborhood Crime Prevention 924-3600
	Open Space or Bosque 873-6632
	Parks Management (7 a.m.-5 p.m.)
	Reservations for Parks 857-8669
Poison & Drug Information	Lights, Park Maint. Vandalism 857-8650
Public Works Department	272-2222
	Barricades 768-2552
	Cockroach Hotline 873-7009
	Emergencies (Water, Sewer) 857-8250
	Information 768-3650
	Pothole Repair 857-8027
	Sandbags 857-8025
	Sidewalk Obstructions 857-8680
	Special Events Permits 768-2551
	Street Maintenance (8-5) 857-8025
	After Hours (all divisions) 857-8250
Recycling Information	761-8100
Recycling Hotline	761-8176
Ridepool	243-7433
Sheriff's Department (non-emer.)	768-4160
State Police	841-9256
State Information	1-800-825-6639
Stop Signs (Missing)	857-8028
Streetlights Out/Down Powerlines	246-5890
Suntran Information (Bus)	843-9200
Sunvan Information (Bus/handicapped)	764-6165
Traffic Sign & Speed Information	857-8680
Trees (Obstructing View)	857-8680
United Way Helpline	247-3671
Vehicle Information	
	Abandoned on Public Streets 768-2277
	Inoperable on Private Property 924-3850
	Pollution Hotline 247-2273
Wasted Water Hotline	768-3640
Weed & Litter Complaints	924-3850
Weed & Litter	761-8100
	<i>(10+ bags/lg. item pick-up - 1 day before trash day)</i>
Zoning Violations	924-3850

**When you make a complaint, be specific, provide addresses and the length of time there has been a problem.**